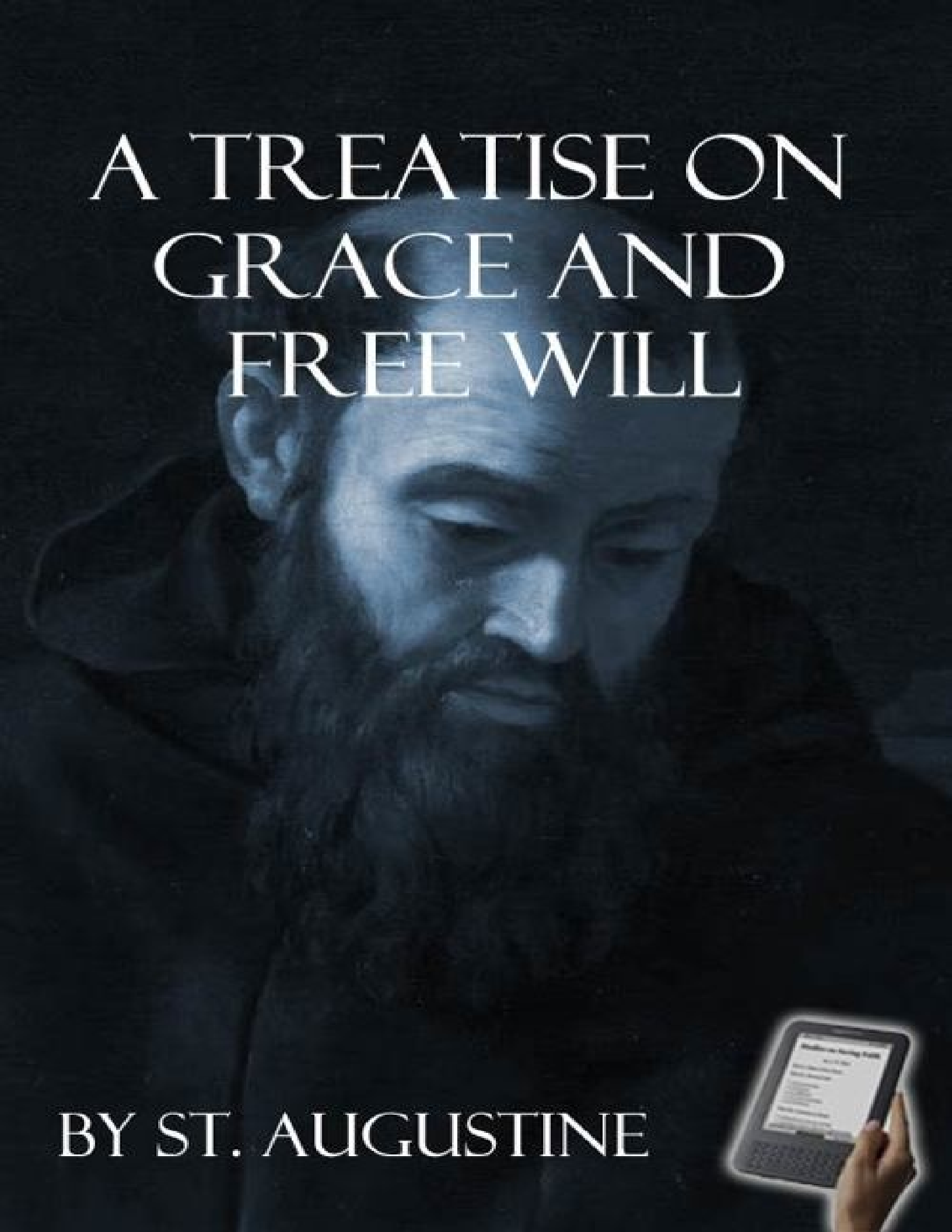
A TREATISE ON GRACE AND FREE WILL



BY ST. AUGUSTINE

A Treatise On Grace And Free Will

BY

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ADDRESSED TO

VALENTINUS AND THE MONKS OF ADRUMETUM, AND COMPLETED IN ONE BOOK.
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In this treatise Augustin teaches us to beware of maintaining grace by denying free will, or free will by denying grace; for that it is evident from the testimony of Scripture that there is in man a free choice of will; and there are also in the same Scriptures inspired proofs given of that very grace of God without which we can do nothing good. Afterwards, in opposition to the Pelagians,[1] he proves that grace is not bestowed according to our merits. He explains how eternal life, which is rendered to good works, is really of grace. He then goes on to show that the grace which is given to us through our Lord Jesus Christ is neither the knowledge of the law, nor nature, nor simply remission of sins; but that it is grace that makes us fulfil the law, and causes nature to be liberated from the dominion of sin. He demolishes that vain subterfuge of the Pelagians, to the effect that "grace, although it is not bestowed according to the merits of good works, is yet given according to the merits of the antecedent good-will of the man who believes and prays." He incidentally touches the question, why God commands what he means himself to give, and whether he imposes on us any commands which we are unable to perform. He clearly shows that the love which is indispensable for fulfilling the commandments is only within us from God himself. He points out that God works in men's hearts to incline their wills however he wills, either to good works according to his mercy, or to evil works in return for their deserving—his judgment, indeed, being sometimes manifest, sometimes hidden, but always righteous. Lastly, he teaches us that a clear example of the gratuitousness of grace, not given in return for our deserts,[2] is supplied to us in the case of those infants which are saved,

while others perish though their case is identical with that of the rest.

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CHAPTER 1.
THE OCCASION FOR AND ARGUMENT OF THIS WORK

WITH reference to those persons who so preach and defend man's free will, as to boldly deny and endeavour to do away with the grace of God which Calls us to Him, and which delivers us from our evil deserts, and by which we obtain the good deserts which lead to everlasting life: we have already said a good deal in discussion, and committed it to writing, so far as the Lord has granted to enable us. But since there are some persons who so defend God's grace as to deny man's free will, or who suppose that free will is denied when grace is defended, I have determined to write somewhat on this point to your Love, my brother Valentinus, and to the rest of you who are serving God together under the impulse of a mutual love. For it has been told me concerning you, brethren, by some members of your brotherhood who have visited us, and are the bearers of this communication of ours to you, that there are dissensions among you on this subject. This then being the case, dearly beloved, so that you are not disturbed by the obscurity of this question, I counsel you first to thank God for such things as you understand; but as for all which is beyond the reach of your mind, pray for understanding from the Lord, observing at the same time, peace and love among yourselves; and until He Himself leads you to perceive what at present is beyond your comprehension, walk firmly on the ground of which you are sure. This is the advice of the Apostle Paul who, after saying that he was not yet perfect, a little later adds, "Let us, therefore, as many as are perfect, be thus minded," Phil 3.12, 15—meaning perfect to a certain extent, but not having attained to a perfection sufficient for us; and then immediately he adds, "And if in anything you are otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this to you. Nevertheless, to what we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule."Phil 3.16 For by walking in what we have attained, we shall be able to advance to what we have not yet attained—God revealing it to us if in anything we are otherwise minded—provided we do not give up what He has already revealed.

CHAPTER 2.
THE EXISTENCE OF FREE WILL IN MAN IS PROVED FROM THE PRECEPTS ADDRESSED TO HIM BY GOD

Now He has revealed to us, through His Holy Scriptures, that there is in a man, a free choice of will. But how He has revealed this I do not recount in human language, but in divine. There is, to begin with, the fact that God's precepts themselves would be of no use to a man unless he had free choice of will, so that by performing them, he might obtain the promised rewards. For they are given so that no one might be able to plead the excuse of ignorance, as the Lord says concerning the Jews in the gospel: "If I had not come and spoken to them, they would have no sin; but now they have no excuse for their sin."Joh 15.22 Of what sin does He speak, but of that great one which He foreknew while speaking thus, that they would make their own—that is, the death they were going to inflict upon Him? For they did not have "no sin" before Christ came to them in the flesh. The apostle also says: "The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who hold back the truth in unrighteousness; because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God has showed it unto them. For the invisible things of Him are from the creation of the world clearly seen—being understood by the things that are made—even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are inexcusable."Rom 1.18-20 In what sense does he pronounce them to be "inexcusable," except with reference to such excuses as human pride is apt to allege in such words as, "If I had only known, I would have done it; did I not fail to do it because I was ignorant of it?" or," I would do it if I knew how; but I do not know, therefore I do not do it"? All such excuse is removed from them when the precept is given to them, or the knowledge is made manifest to them, how to avoid sin.

CHAPTER 3.
SINNERS ARE CONVICTED WHEN ATTEMPTING TO EXCUSE THEMSELVES BY BLAMING GOD, BECAUSE THEY HAVE FREE WILL

There are, however, persons who attempt to find excuse for themselves even from God. The Apostle James says to such persons: "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted by God; for God cannot be tempted with evil, nor does He tempt any man. But every man is tempted when he is drawn away out of his own lust, and enticed. Then, when lust has conceived, it brings forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, brings forth death."Jas 1.13-15 Solomon, too, in his book of Proverbs, has this answer for those who wish to find an excuse for themselves from God Himself: "The folly of a man spoils his ways; but he blames God in his heart."Prov 19.3 And in the book of Ecclesiasticus[3] we read: "Do not say it is through the Lord that I fell away; for you ought not to do the things that He hates: nor say, He has caused me to err; for He has no need of the sinful man. The Lord hates all abomination, and those who fear God do not love it. He made man from the beginning, and left him in the hand of His counsel. If you are willing, you shall keep His commandments, and perform true fidelity. He has set fire and water before you: stretch forth your hand to whichever you will. Before man is life and death, and whichever pleases him shall be given to him."Sir 15.11-17 Observe how very plainly is set before our view, the free choice of the human will.

CHAPTER 4.
THE DIVINE COMMANDS MOST SUITED TO THE WILL, THEMSELVES ILLUSTRATE ITS FREEDOM

What is the import of the fact that in so many passages, God requires all His commandments to be kept and fulfilled? How does He make this requisite if there is no free will? What does "the happy man" mean, of whom the Psalmist says that his will[4] has been the law of the Lord?Psa 1.2 Does he not clearly enough show that a man by his own will takes his stand in the law of God? Then again, there are so many commandments which in some way are expressly adapted to the human will; for instance there is, "Do not be overcome by evil,"Rom 12.1 and others of similar import, such as, "Do not be like a horse or a mule, which have no understanding;"Psa 32.9 and, "Do not reject the counsels of your mother;"Prov 1.8 and, "Do not be wise in your own conceit;"Prov 3.7 and, "Do not despise the chastening of the Lord;"Prov 3.11 and, "Do not forget my law;"Prov 3.1 and, "Do not forbear to do good to the poor;"Prov 3.27 and, "Do not devise evil against your friend;"Prov 3,29 and, "Give no heed to a worthless woman;"Prov 5.2 and, "He is not inclined to understand how to do good;"Prov 2.9 and, "They refused to pay attention to my counsel;"Prov 1.30 with numberless other passages of the inspired Scriptures of the Old Testament. And what do they all show us but the free choice of the human will? So, again, in the evangelical and apostolic books of the New Testament, what other lesson is taught us, as when it is said, "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth;"Mat 6.19 and, "Do not fear those who kill the body;"Mat 10.28 and, "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself;"Mat 16.24 and again, "Peace on earth to men of good will."Luk 2.14 So also what the Apostle Paul says: "Let him do what he wills; he does not sin if he marries. Nevertheless, he that stands steadfast in his heart, having no necessity, but has power over his own will, and has so decreed in his heart that he will keep himself a virgin, does well."1Cor 7.36-37 And so again, "If I do this willingly, I have a reward;"1Cor 9.17 while in another passage he says, "Be sober and righteous, and do not sin;"1Cor 15.34 and again, "As you have a readiness to will, so also let there be a prompt performance."2Cor 8.11 Then he remarks to Timothy about the younger

widows, “When they have begun to grow wanton against Christ, they choose to marry.”1Tim 5.11 So in another passage, “All that will to live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution;”2Tim 3.12 while to Timothy himself he says, “Do not neglect the gift that is in you.”1Tim 4.14 Then to Philemon he addresses this explanation: “That your benefit should not be as it were of necessity, but of your own will.”Phm 1.14 Servants also he advises to obey their masters “with a good will.”Eph 6.7 In strict accordance with this, James says: “Do not err, my beloved brethren”Jas 1.16 and “do not have the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ with respect to persons;”[5] and,” Do not speak evil one of another.”Jas 4.11 So also John in his Epistle writes, “Do not love the world,”1Joh 2.15 and other things of the same import.

Now wherever it is said, “Do not do this,” and “Do not do that,” and wherever there is any requirement in the divine admonitions for the work of the will to do anything, or to refrain from doing anything, there is at once a sufficient proof of free will. No man, therefore, when he sins, can in his heart blame God for it, but every man must impute the fault to himself. Nor does it detract at all from a man’s own will when he performs any act in accordance with God. Indeed, a work is then to be pronounced a good one, when a person does it willingly; then, too, may the reward of a good work be hoped for from Him concerning whom it is written, “He shall reward every man according to his works.”Mat 16.27

CHAPTER 5.
IGNORANCE AFFORDS NO EXCUSE THAT WILL FREE THE OFFENDER FROM PUNISHMENT; BUT TO SIN WITH KNOWLEDGE IS A GRAVER THING THAN TO SIN IN IGNORANCE

The excuse such as men are in the habit of alleging from ignorance, is taken away from those persons who know God's commandments. But neither will those be without punishment who do not know the law of God. "For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law; and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law."Rom 2.12 Now the apostle does not appear to me to have said this as if he meant that they would have to suffer something worse, who in their sins are ignorant of the law, than those who know it. It is seemingly worse, no doubt, "to perish" than "to be judged." But inasmuch as he was speaking of the Gentiles and of the Jews when he used these words, and because the former were without the law, but the latter had received the law, who can venture to say that the Jews who sin in the law will not perish, since they refused to believe in Christ, when it was about them that the apostle said, "They shall be judged by the law"? For without faith in Christ no man can be delivered; and therefore they will be so judged, that they perish. If indeed the condition of those who are ignorant of the law of God is worse than the condition of those who know it, then how can that be true which the Lord says in the gospel: "The servant who does not know his lord's will, and commits things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes; whereas the servant who knows his lord's will, and commits things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with many stripes"? Luk 12.47-48 Observe how clearly He shows here that it is a graver matter for a man to sin *with* knowledge, than in *ignorance*. And yet we must not on this account seek refuge in the shades of ignorance, with the view of finding our excuse in it. It is one thing to be ignorant, and another thing to be unwilling to know. For the will is at fault in the case of the man of whom it is said, "He is not inclined to understand, so as to do good." But even the ignorance which is not theirs who *refuse* to know, but theirs who are *simply* ignorant as it were, does not so far excuse anyone as to exempt him from the punishment of eternal fire, even though his failure to believe has been the result of his not having heard at all what he should believe; but it probably goes only so far as to mitigate his punishment.

For it was not said without reason: “Pour out Your wrath upon the heathen that have not known You;”Psa 79.6 nor again according to what the apostle says: “When He comes from heaven in a flame of fire to take vengeance on those who do not know God.”2Thes 1.7-8 Yet in order that we may have that knowledge that will prevent our saying, each one of us, “I did not know;” “I did not hear;” “I did not understand;” the human will is summoned in words such as these: “Do not wish to be as the horse or the mule, which have no understanding;” although it may show itself even worse, of which it is written, “A stubborn servant will not be reproved by words; for even if he understands, yet he will not obey.”Prov 29.19 But when a man says, “I cannot do what I am commanded, because I am mastered by my concupiscence,” he no longer has any excuse to plead from ignorance, nor reason to blame God in his heart; but he recognizes and laments his own evil in himself. And still the apostle says to such a person: “Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.”Rom 12.21 Of course, the very fact that the injunction, “Do not *consent* to be overcome,” is addressed to him, it undoubtedly summons the determination of his *will*. For to consent and to refuse are functions that are proper to will.

CHAPTER 6.
GOD'S GRACE IS TO BE MAINTAINED AGAINST THE PELAGIANS;
THE PELAGIAN HERESY IS NOT AN OLD ONE

However, it is to be feared lest all these and similar testimonies of Holy Scripture (and undoubtedly there are a great many of them), in maintaining free will, be understood in such a way as to leave no room for God's assistance and grace in leading a godly life, and a good conversation,[6] to which the eternal reward is due; and lest poor wretched man, when he leads a good life and performs good works (or rather *thinks* that he leads a good life and performs good works), should dare to glory in himself and not in the Lord, and to put his hope of righteous living in himself alone — so as to be followed by the prophet Jeremiah's malediction when he says, "Cursed is the man who has hope in man, and makes strong the flesh of his arm, and whose heart departs from the Lord."Jer 17.5 Understand this passage of the prophet, my brethren, I pray you. Because the prophet did *not* say, "Cursed is the man who has hope in his own self," it might seem to some that the passage, "Cursed is the man who has hope in man," was spoken to prevent man having hope in any other man but himself. Therefore, in order to show that his admonition to man was not to have hope in himself: after saying, "Cursed is the man who has hope in man," he immediately added, "and makes strong the flesh of his arm." He used the word "arm" to designate power in operation. The term "flesh," however, must be understood to mean human frailty. And therefore the one who makes strong the flesh of his arm, supposes that a power which is frail and weak (that is, human) is sufficient for him to perform good works; and therefore he does not put his hope in God for help. This is the reason why he subjoined the further clause, "And whose heart departs from the Lord." This is the character of Pelagian heresy, which is not an ancient one, but has only lately come into existence. Against this system of error there was first a good deal of discussion; then, as the ultimate resource, it was referred to sundry episcopal councils, the proceedings of which, not indeed in every instance, but in some, I have dispatched to you for your perusal. In order, then, to perform good works, let us not have hope in man, making strong the flesh of our arm; nor let our heart ever depart from the Lord; but let us say to him, "Be my helper; do not forsake me, nor despise me, O God

of my salvation."[Psa 27.9]

CHAPTER 7.
GRACE IS NECESSARY ALONG WITH FREE WILL, TO LEAD A GOOD LIFE

Therefore, my dearly beloved, as we have now proved by our former testimonies from Holy Scripture that there is in man a free determination of will for living rightly and acting rightly; so now let us see what are the divine testimonies concerning the grace of God, without which we are not able to do any good thing. And first of all, I will say something about the very profession which you make in your brotherhood. Now your society, in which you are leading lives of continence, could not hold together unless you despised conjugal pleasure. Well, the Lord was one day conversing on this very topic, when His disciples remarked to Him, "If such be the case of a man with his wife, it is not good to marry." He then answered them, "All men cannot receive this saying, save those to whom it is given."Mat 19.10 And was it not to Timothy's free will that the apostle appealed when he exhorted him in these words: "Keep yourself continent"?1Tim 5.22 He also explained the power of the will in this matter, when He said, "Having no necessity, but possessing power over his own will, to keep his virgin."1Cor 7.37 And yet, "all men do not receive this saying, except those to whom the power is given." Now those to whom this is not given either are unwilling, or they do not fulfil what they will; whereas those to whom it is given so will as to accomplish what they will. In order, therefore, that this saying, which is not received by all men, may yet be received by *some*, there are [needed] both the gift of God and free will.

CHAPTER 8.
CONJUGAL CHASTITY IS ITSELF THE GIFT OF GOD

It is concerning conjugal chastity itself that the apostle treats when he says, “Let him do what he will, he does not sin if he marries;”1Cor 7.36 and yet this too is God’s gift, for the Scripture says, “It is by the Lord that the woman is joined to her husband.” Accordingly the teacher of the Gentiles, in one of his discourses, commends both conjugal chastity, whereby adulteries are prevented, and the still more perfect continence which foregoes all cohabitation, and he shows how both one and the other are severally the gift of God. Writing to the Corinthians, he admonished married persons not to defraud each other; and then, after his admonition to these, he added: “But I could wish that all men were even as I am myself,”1Cor 7.7—meaning, of course, that he abstained from all cohabitation; and then proceeded to say: “But every man has his own gift of God, one after this manner, and another after that.”1Cor 7.7 Now, do the many precepts which are written in the law of God, forbidding all fornication and adultery, indicate anything else than free will? Surely such precepts would not be given unless a man had a will of his own with which to obey the divine commandments. And yet it is God’s gift which is indispensable for the observance of the precepts of chastity. Accordingly, it is said in the Book of Wisdom: “When I knew that no one could be continent, unless God gives it, then this became a point of wisdom to know whose gift it was.”Wis 8.21 “Every man,” however, “is tempted when he is drawn away by his own lust, and enticed”Jas 1.14 not to observe and keep these holy precepts of chastity. If he should say in respect to these commandments, “I wish to keep them, but I am mastered by my concupiscence,” then the Scripture responds to his free will, as I have already said: “Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.”Rom 12.21 In order that this victory may be gained, however, grace renders its help; and were this help not given, then the law would be nothing but the strength of sin. For concupiscence is increased and receives greater energies from the prohibition of the law, unless the spirit of grace helps. This explains the statement of the great Teacher of the Gentiles, when he says, “The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law.”1Cor 15.56 See, then, I pray you, where this confession of weakness originates when a man says, “I desire to keep what the law

commands, but I am overcome by the strength of my concupiscence." And when his will is addressed, and it is said, "Do not be overcome by evil," of what avail is anything but the succour of God's grace to the accomplishment of the precept? The apostle himself afterwards stated this; for after saying "The strength of sin is the law" he immediately subjoined, "But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ."[1Cor 15.57] It follows then, that the victory in which sin is vanquished is nothing else than the gift of God, who helps free will in this contest.

CHAPTER 9.
PRAYING WHEN ENTERING INTO TEMPTATION IS A PROOF OF GRACE

This is why our Heavenly Master also says: "Watch and pray, that you do not enter into temptation."Mat 26.41 Let every man, therefore, when fighting against his own concupiscence, pray that he enter not into temptation; that is, that he be not drawn aside and enticed by it. But he does not enter into temptation if he conquers his evil concupiscence by good will. And yet the determination of the human will is insufficient, unless the Lord grants it victory in answer to prayer, that it not enter into temptation. What indeed affords clearer evidence of the grace of God, than the acceptance of prayer in any petition? If our Saviour had only said, "Watch that you do not enter into temptation," He would appear to have done nothing further than admonish man's will; but since He added the words, "and pray," He showed that God *helps* us not to enter into temptation. It is to the free will of man that the words are addressed: "My son, do not remove yourself from the chastening of the Lord."Prov 3.11 And the Lord said: "I have prayed for you, Peter, that your faith does not fail."Luk 22.32 So that a man is assisted by grace, in order that his will may not be uselessly commanded.

CHAPTER 10.
FREE WILL AND GOD'S GRACE ARE SIMULTANEOUSLY COMMENDED

When God says, "Turn to me, and I will turn to you,"[Zec 1.3] one of these clauses—that which invites our return to God—evidently belongs to our *will*; while the other, which promises His return to us, belongs to His *grace*. Here, possibly, the Pelagians think they have a justification for their opinion which they so prominently advance: that God's grace is given according to our merits. In the East indeed, that is to say, in the province of Palestine in which the city of Jerusalem lies, Pelagius, when examined in person by the bishop, did not venture to affirm this. For it happened that among the objections which were brought up against him, this in particular was objected: he maintained that the grace of God was given according to our merits—an opinion which was so different from catholic doctrine, and so hostile to the grace of Christ, that unless he had anathematized it, as laid to his charge, he himself must have been anathematized on its account. He pronounced, indeed, the required anathema upon the dogma, but how insincerely his later books plainly show; for in them he maintains absolutely no other opinion than that the grace of God is given according to our merits. They collect such passages out of the Scriptures—like the one which I just now quoted, "Turn to me, and I will turn to you,"—as if it were owing to the merit of our turning to God, that His grace were given us — in which He Himself even turns to us. Now the persons who hold this opinion fail to observe that, unless our turning to God were itself God's gift, it would not be said to Him in prayer, "Turn us again, O God of hosts;"[Psa 80.3] and, "You, O God, will turn and quicken us;"[Psa 80.7] and again, "Turn us, O God of our salvation,"[Psa 85.4]—with other passages of similar import, too numerous to mention here. For with respect to our coming to Christ, what else does it mean than our being turned to Him by believing? And yet He says: "No man can come to me, unless it was given to him by my Father."[Joh 6.65]

CHAPTER 11.
OTHER PASSAGES OF SCRIPTURE WHICH THE PELAGIANS ABUSE

Then, again, there is the Scripture contained in the second book of the Chronicles: "The Lord is with you when you are with Him: and if you shall seek Him, you shall find Him; but if you forsake Him, He will also forsake you."2Chr 15.2 This passage, no doubt, clearly manifests the choice of the will. But those who maintain that God's grace is given according to our merits, receive these testimonies of Scripture in such a way as to believe that our merit lies in the circumstance of our "being with God," while His grace is given according to this merit, so that He too may be with us. In like manner, that our merit lies in the fact of "our seeking God," and then His grace is given according to this merit, in order that we may find Him." Again, there is a passage in the first book of the same Chronicles which declares the choice of the will: "And you, Solomon, my son, know the God of your father, and serve Him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind, for the Lord searches all hearts, and understands all the imaginations of the thoughts; if you seek Him, He will be found by you; but if you forsake Him, He will cast you off forever."1Chr 28.9 But these people find some room for human merit in the clause, "If you seek Him," and then grace is thought to be given according to this merit in what is said in the ensuing words, "He will be found by you." And so they labour with all their might to show that God's grace is given according to our merits—in other words, that grace is not grace. For, as the apostle most expressly says, to those who receive reward according to merit, "the recompense is not reckoned of grace but of debt."Rom 4.4

CHAPTER 12.
PAUL PROVES THAT GRACE IS NOT GIVEN ACCORDING TO MEN'S MERITS

Now there was, no doubt, a decided merit in the Apostle Paul, but it was an evil one while he persecuted the Church; and he says of it: "I am not fit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the Church of God."1Cor 15.9 And it was while he had this evil merit that a good one was rendered to him instead of the evil; and therefore he went on at once to say, "But by the grace of God, I am what I am."1Cor 15.10 Then, in order to exhibit also his free will, he added in the next clause, "And His grace within me was not in vain, but I have laboured more abundantly than all of them." He appeals to this free will of man in the case of others also, as when he says to them, "We beseech you that you do not receive the grace of God in vain."2Cor 6.1 Now, how could he so enjoin them if they received God's grace in such a manner as to lose their own will? Nevertheless, lest the will itself should be deemed capable of doing any good thing without the grace of God, after saying, "His grace within me was not in vain, but I have laboured more abundantly than they all," he immediately added the qualifying clause, "Yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me."1Cor 15.10 In other words, Not I alone, but the grace of God with me. And thus it was neither the grace of God alone, nor was it he himself alone, but it was the grace Of God *with* him. Despite his call from heaven, and his conversion by that great and most effectual call, God's grace was alone; this is because his merits, though great, were yet evil. Then, to quote one passage more, he says to Timothy: "But be a co-labourer with the gospel, according to the power of God who saves us and calls us with His holy calling—not according to our works but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given to us in Christ Jesus."2Tim 1.8-9 Then elsewhere he enumerates his merits, and he gives us this description of their evil character: "For we ourselves also were formerly foolish, unbelieving, deceived, serving various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another."Tit 3.3 To be sure, nothing but punishment was due to such a course of evil desert! God, however, who returns good for evil by His grace, which is not given according to our merits, enabled the apostle to conclude his statement and say: "But when the kindness and love of our Saviour God shone upon us—not of works of

righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the layer of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Ghost, whom He shed upon us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that being justified by His grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life."Tit 3.4-7

CHAPTER 13.
THE GRACE OF GOD IS NOT GIVEN ACCORDING TO MERIT, BUT ITSELF MAKES ALL GOOD DESERT

From these and similar passages of Scripture, we gather the proof that God's grace is not given according to our merits. The truth is, we see that it is given not only where there are no good merits, but even where there are many preceding evil merits: and we see it given so daily. But it is plain that when it has been given, also our good merits begin to be—yet only by means of grace; for if that were only to withdraw itself, man falls — not raised up, but precipitated by free will. This is why, even when he begins to possess good merits, no man ought to attribute them to himself, but to God who is thus addressed by the Psalmist: "Be my helper, do not forsake me."Psa 38.21-22 By saying, "Do not forsake me," he shows that if he were to be forsaken, he is unable of himself to do any good thing. Therefore he also says: "I said in my abundance, I shall never be moved,"Psa 30.6 for he thought that he had such an abundance of good to call his own, that he would not be moved. But in order that he might be taught whose that was, of which he had begun to boast as if it were his own, he was admonished by the gradual desertion of God's grace; and he says: "O Lord, in Your good pleasure You added strength to my beauty. You did, however, turn away Your face, and then I was troubled and distressed." Thus, it is necessary for a man that he should not only be justified by the grace of God when unrighteous—that is, be changed from unholiness to righteousness—when he is requited with good for his evil; but that, even after he has become justified by faith, grace should accompany him on his way, and he should lean upon it, lest he fall. On this account it is written concerning the Church herself in the book of Canticles: "Who is this that comes up in white raiment, leaning upon her kinsman?"Song 8.5 Made white is she who by herself alone could not be white. And by whom has she been made white except by Him who says by the prophet, "Though your sins be as purple, I will make them white as snow"?Isa 1.18 At the time then that she was made white, she deserved nothing good; but now that she is made white, she walks well;—but it is only by her continuing to ever lean upon Him by whom she was made white. Therefore Jesus Himself, on whom she leans that was made white, said to His disciples, "Without me you can do nothing."Joh 15.5

CHAPTER 14.
PAUL FIRST RECEIVED GRACE THAT HE MIGHT WIN THE CROWN

Let us return now to the Apostle Paul who, as we have found, obtained God's grace, who recompenses good for evil, who is without any good merits of his own, but rather with many evil merits. Let us see what he says when his final sufferings were approaching. Writing to Timothy: "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight; I have finished my course; I have kept the faith."[2Tim 4.6-7] He enumerates these, of course, as they are now his good merits; so that just as he obtained grace after his evil merits, so now, after his good merits, he might receive the crown. Observe therefore what follows: "From now on there is laid up for me," he says, "a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day."[2Tim 4.8] Now, to whom should the righteous Judge award the crown, except to him on whom the merciful Father had bestowed grace? And how could the crown be one "of righteousness," unless grace had preceded it, which "justifies the ungodly"?[Rom 4.5] Moreover, how could these things now be awarded as of debt, unless the other had before been given as a free gift?

CHAPTER 15.
THE PELAGIANS PROFESS THAT THE ONLY GRACE WHICH IS *NOT* GIVEN ACCORDING TO OUR MERITS, IS THAT OF THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS

The Pelagians say that the only grace which is *not* given according to our merits, is that grace by which man's sins are forgiven; but that grace which is given in the end, that is, eternal life, is rendered according to our preceding merits. These must not be allowed to go without an answer. If, indeed, they so understand our merits as to acknowledge them to also be the gifts of God, then their opinion would not deserve reprobation. But inasmuch as they so preach human merits as to declare that a man has them of himself, then most rightly the apostle replies: "Who makes you to differ from another? And what do you have, that you did not receive? Now, if you received it, why do you glory as if you had not received it?"1Cor 4.7 To a man who holds such views, it is perfect truth to say that it is His own gifts that God crowns, and not your merits— at least, if your merits are of yourself, and not of Him. If, indeed, they are such, they are *evil*,[7] and God does not crown them; but if they are *good*, then they are God's gifts, because, as the Apostle James says, "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights."Jas 1.17 In accordance with this, John [the Baptist], the Lord's forerunner, also declares: "A man can receive nothing unless it is given him from heaven"Joh 3.27—*from heaven* of course, because the Holy Ghost also came from there, when Jesus ascended on high, led captivity captive, and gave gifts to men.Eph 4.8 If, then, your good merits are God's gifts, God does not crown your merits as *your* merits, but as His own *gifts*.

CHAPTER 16.
PAUL FOUGHT, BUT GOD GAVE THE VICTORY: HE RAN, BUT GOD SHOWED MERCY

Let us, therefore, consider those very merits of the Apostle Paul which he said the Righteous Judge would recompense with the crown of righteousness; and let us see whether these merits of his were really his own—I mean, whether they were obtained by him of himself, or were the gifts of God. "I have fought," says he, "the good fight; I have finished my course; I have kept the faith."2Tim 4.7 Now, in the first place, these good works were nothing, unless they had been preceded by good thoughts. Observe therefore what he says concerning these very thoughts. His words when writing to the Corinthians are: "Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God."2Cor 3.5 Then let us look at each several merit. "I have fought the good fight." Well, now, I want to know by what power he fought. Was it by a power which he possessed of himself, or by strength given to him from above? It is impossible to suppose that so great a teacher as the apostle was ignorant of the law of God, which proclaims the following in Deuteronomy: "Do not say in your heart, My own strength and energy of hand has worked for me this great power; but you shall remember the Lord your God, how it is He that gives you strength to acquire such power."Deu 8.17 And what does "the good fight" avail, unless it is followed by victory? And who gives the victory but He of whom the apostle says himself, "Thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ"?1Cor 15.57 Then in another passage, having quoted these words from the Psalm: "Because for Your sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for slaughter,"Psa 44.22 he went on to declare: "No, in all these things we are more than conquerors, through Him that loved us."Rom 8.37 Therefore, the victory is not accomplished by ourselves, but by Him who has loved us. In the second clause he says, "I have finished my course."2Tim 4.7 Now, who is it that says this, but the one who declares in another passage, "So then it is not of him that wills, nor of him that runs, but of God that shows mercy."Rom 9.16 And this sentence can by no means be transposed, so that it could be said: It is not of God, who shows mercy, but of the man who wills and runs. If any person is bold enough to express the matter this way, he most plainly shows

himself to be at issue with the apostle.

CHAPTER 17.
THE FAITH THAT HE KEPT WAS THE FREE GIFT OF GOD

His last clause runs thus: “I have kept the faith.”2Tim 4.7 But he who says this is the same one who declares in another passage, “I have obtained mercy that I might be faithful.”1Cor 7.25 He does not say, “I obtained mercy because I was faithful,” but “in order that I might be faithful,” thus showing that even faith itself cannot be had without God’s mercy, and that it is the gift of God. This he very expressly teaches us when he says, “For by grace are you saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God.”Eph 2.8 They might possibly say, “We received grace because we believed;” as if they would attribute the faith to themselves, and the grace to God. Therefore, the apostle having said, “You are saved through faith,” added, “and that not of yourselves, but it is the gift of God.” And again, lest they say they deserved so great a gift by their works, he immediately added, “not of works, lest any man should boast.”Eph 2.9 It is not that he denied good works, or emptied them of their value, when he says that “God renders to every man according to his works;”Rom 2.6 but it is because works proceed from faith, and not faith from works. Therefore it is from Him that we have works of righteousness, from whom also comes faith itself, concerning which it is written, “The just shall live by faith.”Hab 2.4

CHAPTER 18.
FAITH WITHOUT GOOD WORKS IS NOT SUFFICIENT FOR SALVATION

However, unintelligent persons with regard to the apostle's statement: "We conclude that a man is justified by faith *without* the works of the law,"Rom 3.28 have thought him to mean that faith suffices for a man, even if he leads a bad life, and has no good works. It is impossible that such a character should be deemed "a vessel of election" by the apostle who, after declaring that "in Christ Jesus neither circumcision avails anything, nor uncircumcision," adds at once, "but faith which *works* by love." Gal 5.6 It is such faith which severs God's faithful from unclean demons—for even these demons "believe and tremble,"Jas 2.19 as the Apostle James says; but they do not "do well."Jas 2.8 Therefore they do not possess the faith by which the just man lives—the faith which works by love in such a way that God recompenses it with eternal life, according to its works. But inasmuch as we have even our good works from God, from whom likewise come our faith and our love, therefore the selfsame great teacher of the Gentiles has designated "eternal life" itself as God's gracious "gift."

CHAPTER 19.
HOW IS ETERNAL LIFE BOTH A REWARD FOR SERVICE, AND A FREE GIFT OF GRACE?

And hence there arises no small question which must be solved by the Lord's gift. Eternal life is rendered for good works, as the Scripture most openly declares: "Then He shall reward every man according to his works:"Mat 16.27 If so, then how can eternal life be a matter of grace, seeing that grace is not rendered for works, but is given gratuitously, as the apostle himself tells us: "To him that works, the reward is not reckoned of grace, but of debt;"Rom 4.4 and again: "There is a remnant saved according to the election of grace," with these words immediately subjoined: "And if of grace, then is it no more of works; otherwise grace is no more grace."Rom 11.5-6 How then is eternal life by grace, when it is received from works? Does the apostle perhaps not say that eternal life is a grace? No, he has so called it, with a clearness which none can possibly dispute. It requires no acute intellect but only an attentive reader to discover this. For after saying, "The wages of sin is death," he at once added, "but the grace [or gift] of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."Rom 6.23

CHAPTER 20.
THE QUESTION ANSWERED: JUSTIFICATION IS GRACE SIMPLY AND ENTIRELY; ETERNAL LIFE IS REWARD, AND GRACE

This question then seems to me to be by no means capable of solution, unless we understand that even those good works of ours, which are recompensed with eternal life, belong to the grace of God, because of what is said by the Lord Jesus: "Without me you can do nothing."Joh 15.5 And the apostle himself said, "By grace are you saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast."Eph 2.8-9 He saw of course, the possibility that men would think from this statement that good works are not necessary to those who believe, but that faith alone suffices for them; and again, he saw the possibility of men's boasting of their good works, as if they were capable of performing them of themselves. Therefore, to meet these opinions on both sides, he immediately added, "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God has before ordained that we should walk in them."Eph 2.10 What is the purport[8] of his saying, "Not of works, lest any man should boast," while commending the grace of God? And then why does he afterwards, when giving a reason for using such words say, "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works"? Why, therefore, does it run, "Not of works, lest any man should boast"?

Now, hear and understand: "Not of works" is spoken of the works which you suppose have their origin in yourself alone; but you need to think of works for which God has moulded you (that is, has formed and created you). For of these he says, "We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works." Now he does not speak here of that creation which made us human beings; but he speaks of that in reference to what one said who was already in full manhood, "Create in me a clean heart, O God."Psa 51.10 Concerning this, the apostle also says, "Therefore, if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things have become new," and "all things are of God."2Cor 5.17-18 We are framed therefore (that is, formed and created), "in the good works which" we have not prepared ourselves, but which "God has before ordained that we should walk in them." It follows then, dearly beloved, beyond all

doubt, that as your *good* life is nothing else than God's grace, so also the *eternal* life—which is the recompense of a good life—is the grace of God; moreover [eternal life] is given gratuitously, even as that [good life] is given gratuitously, for which [eternal life] is given. But that for which it is given, is solely and simply: *grace*. This therefore is also that which is given to it, because it is its reward—grace is for grace, as if it were remuneration for righteousness—in order that it may be true, because *it is true*, that God "shall reward every man according to his works."

CHAPTER 21.
ETERNAL LIFE IS "GRACE FOR GRACE"

Perhaps you ask whether we ever read in the Sacred Scriptures of "grace for grace." Well you possess the Gospel according to John, which is perfectly clear in its very great light. Here John the Baptist says of Christ: "Of His fulness we have all received, even grace for grace."[Joh 1.16] So that out of His fulness we have received, according to our humble measure, our particles of ability as it were, for leading good lives—"according as God has dealt to every man his measure of faith;"[Rom 12.3] because "every man has his proper gift from God; one after this manner, and another after that."[1Cor 7.7] And this is grace. But, over and above this, we shall also receive "grace for grace" when we have eternal life awarded to us, of which the apostle said: "The grace of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord"[Rom 6.23] —having just said that "the wages of sin is death." He deservedly called it "wages," because everlasting death is awarded as its proper due for diabolical service. Now, when it was in his power to say, and to rightly say: "But the wages of righteousness is eternal life," he yet preferred to say: "The grace of God is eternal life." He did so in order that we may understand from this that God does not, for any merits of our own, but from His own divine compassion, prolong our existence to everlasting life—even as the Psalmist says to his soul, "Who crowns you with mercy and compassion."[Psa 103.4] Well now, is not a crown given as the reward for good deeds? However, it is only because He works good works in good men—of whom it is said, "It is God who works in you both to will and to do His good pleasure,"[Phil 2.13] —that the Psalm has it as just now quoted: "He crowns you with mercy and compassion," since it is through His mercy that we perform the good deeds for which the crown is awarded. However, it is not to be supposed for a moment, because he said, "It is God who works in you both to will and to do his own good pleasure," that free will is taken away. If this indeed had been his meaning, he would *not* have said just before, "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling."[Phil 2.12] For when the command is given "to work," their free will is addressed; and when it is added, "with fear and trembling," they are warned against boasting of their good deeds as if they were their own, by attributing to themselves the performance of anything good. It is pretty much as if the apostle had this question put to

him: “Why did you use the phrase, ‘with fear and trembling’?” And it is as if he answered the inquiry of his examiners by telling them, “For it is God who works in you.” Because if you fear and tremble, then you do not boast of your good works as if they were your own, since it is God who works within you.

CHAPTER 22.
WHO IS THE TRANSGRESSOR OF THE LAW? THE OLDNESS OF ITS LETTER; THE NEWNESS OF ITS SPIRIT

Therefore, brethren, by free will you should not do evil, but good; this indeed is the lesson taught to us in the law of God in the Holy Scriptures —both Old and New. Let us, however, read, and by the Lord's help understand, what the apostle tells us: "Because by the deeds of the law, no flesh shall be justified in His sight; for by the law is the knowledge of sin."Rom 3.20 Observe, he says "the knowledge," not "the destruction," of sin. But when a man knows sin, and grace does not help him to avoid what he knows, undoubtedly the law works wrath. And the apostle explicitly says this in another passage. His words are: "The law works wrath."Rom 4.15 The reason for this statement lies in the fact that God's wrath is greater in the case of the transgressor who by the law knows sin, and yet commits it; such a man is thus a transgressor of the law, even as the apostle says in another sentence, "For where there is no law, there is no transgression."Rom 4.15 It is in accordance with this principle that he elsewhere says, "That we may serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter;"Rom 7.6 wishing the law to be understood here by "the oldness of the letter;" and what else is to be understood by "newness of spirit," than grace?

Then, so it might not be thought that he had brought any accusation or suggested any blame against the law, he immediately takes himself to task with this inquiry: "What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid!" He then adds the statement: "No, I would not have known sin but by the law;"Rom 7.6-7 which has the same import as the passage quoted above: "By the law is the knowledge of sin."Rom 3.20 Then: "For I would not have known lust," he says, "except the law had said, 'You shall not covet.'Exo 20.17 But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, worked in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law, sin was dead. For I was alive without the law once; but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died. And the commandment, which was ordained for life, I found to be unto death. For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me. Therefore the law is holy; and the commandment is holy, just, and good. Was, then, that which is good

made death to me? God forbid! But sin, that it might appear sin, worked death in me by that which is good—in order that the sinner, or the sin, might by the commandment become beyond measure."[Rom 7.7-13] And to the Galatians he writes: "Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, except through faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, so that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law, no flesh shall be justified."[Gal 2.16]

CHAPTER 23.
THE PELAGIANS MAINTAIN THAT THE LAW IS THE GRACE OF GOD WHICH HELPS US NOT TO SIN

Why, therefore, do those very vain and perverse Pelagians say that the law is the grace of God by which we are helped not to sin? Do they not, by making such an allegation, unhappily and beyond all doubt contradict the great apostle? He indeed says that, by the law, sin received strength against man; and that man, by the commandment—although it is holy, and just, and good—nevertheless dies; and that death works in him through that which is good; there is no deliverance from this death unless the Spirit quickens him, whom the letter had killed. As he says in another passage, "The letter kills, but the Spirit gives life."[2Cor 3.6] And yet these obstinate persons, blind to God's light and deaf to His voice, maintain that the letter which kills gives life, and thus they dispute the quickening Spirit. "Therefore, brethren" (that I may warn you with better effect in the words of the apostle himself), "we are debtors not to the flesh, to live after the flesh; for if you live after the flesh you shall die; but if you, through the Spirit, mortify the deeds of the body, you shall live."[Rom 8.12-13] I have said this to deter your free will from evil, and to exhort it to good by apostolic words. Yet you must not therefore glory in man—that is to say, in yourselves—rather than in the Lord, when you do not live after the flesh, but through the Spirit mortify the deeds of the flesh. For in order that those to whom the apostle addressed this language might not exalt themselves—thinking that they were able to do such good works as these by their own spirit, and not by the Spirit of God—after saying to them, "If you through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the flesh, you shall live," he at once added, "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God."[Rom 8.14] Therefore, when you mortify the deeds of the flesh by the Spirit—that you may have life—glorify Him, praise Him, give thanks to Him by whose Spirit you are so led as to be able to do those things which show you to be the children of God; "for as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God."

CHAPTER 24.
THOSE WHO WISH TO ESTABLISH THEIR OWN RIGHTEOUSNESS: "GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS" IS WHAT MAN HAS FROM GOD

As many, therefore, as are led by their own spirit, trusting in their own virtue, with the addition merely of the law's assistance, without the help of grace, are not the sons of God. They are those of whom the same apostle speaks as "being ignorant of God's righteousness, and wishing to establish their own righteousness, who have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God."[Rom 10.3] He said this of the Jews who in their self-assumption rejected grace, and therefore did not believe in Christ. Indeed, they wish to establish their own righteousness, he says; and this righteousness is of the law—not that the law was established by them, but that they had constituted their righteousness in the law which is from God. [They did this] when they supposed themselves able to fulfil that law by their own strength, ignorant of God's righteousness—not indeed that law by which God is Himself righteous, but that which man has from God. And so that you may know that he designated as *theirs* the righteousness which is of the law, and as *God's* that which man receives from God, hear what he says in another passage, when speaking of Christ: "For whose sake I counted all things not only as loss, but I deemed them to be dung, that I might win Christ, and be found in Him—not having my own righteousness, which is *of the law*, but that which is through the faith of Christ, which is *of God*."[Phil 3.8-9]

Now what does he mean by "not having my own righteousness, which is of the law," when the law is really not his at all, but God's? It is but this: he called it his own righteousness, although it was of the law, because he thought he could fulfil the law by his own will, without the aid of grace which is through faith in Christ. This is why, after saying, "not having my own righteousness, which is of the law," he immediately subjoined, "but that which is through the faith of Christ, which is of God." This is what they were ignorant of, those of whom he says, "Being ignorant of God's righteousness,"—that is, they were ignorant of the righteousness which is of God, for it is not given by the letter, which kills, but by the life-giving Spirit. "And wishing to establish their own righteousness," which he expressly described as the righteousness of the law when he said, "Not

having my own righteousness, which is of the law," they were not subject to the righteousness of God. In other words, they did not submit themselves to the grace of God. For they were under the law, not under grace, and therefore sin had dominion over them, from which a man is not freed by the *law*, but by *grace*. On this account he says elsewhere, "For sin shall not have dominion over you, because you are not under the law, but under grace;"Rom 6.14 —not that the law is evil—but because they are under its power, it makes them guilty, by imposing commandments, not by aiding.[9] It is by grace that anyone is a doer of the law; and without this grace, he who is placed under the law will only be a hearer of the law.Jas 1.23-25 To such persons he addresses these words: "You who are justified by the law have fallen from grace."Gal 5.4

CHAPTER 25.
THE LAW IS NOT THAT GRACE BY WHICH WE ARE CHRISTIANS, NOR IS OUR NATURE ITSELF

Now who can be so insensible to the words of the apostle, so foolish—no, so insanely ignorant of the purport of his statement—as to venture to affirm that the law is grace, when he who knew very well what he was saying, emphatically declares, "You who are justified by the law have fallen from grace"?Gal 5.4 Well, if the law is *not* grace—seeing that in order that the law itself may be kept, it is not the law, but only grace which can give help—will not our nature at any rate be grace? For this too the Pelagians have been bold enough to aver: that *grace* is the nature in which we were created so as to possess a rational mind by which we are enabled to understand—formed as we are in the image of God, so as to have "dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that creeps upon the earth."Gen 1.28 This, however, is *not* the grace which the apostle commends to us through the faith of Jesus Christ. For it is certain that we possess this nature in common with ungodly men and unbelievers; whereas the grace which comes through the faith of Jesus Christ belongs only to those to whom faith itself pertains. "For all men do not have faith."2Thes 3.2 Now the apostle says with perfect truth to those who by wishing to be justified by the law have fallen from grace, "If righteousness comes by the law, then Christ is dead in vain."Gal 2.21 So likewise, to those who think that the grace which he commends, and which faith in Christ receives, is *nature*, he might use the same language, with the same degree of applicable truth: if righteousness comes from nature, then Christ is dead in vain. But the law was in existence up to that time, and it did not justify; and nature existed too, but it did not justify. It was not then in vain that Christ died, in order that the law might be fulfilled through Him who said, "I have not come to destroy the law, but to fulfil it;"Mat 5.17 and in order that our nature, which was lost through Adam, might be recovered through Him who said he "has come to seek and to save that which was lost;"Luk 19.10 in whose coming the old fathers who loved God likewise believed.

CHAPTER 26.
PELAGIANS CONTEND THAT THE GRACE WHICH IS NEITHER THE LAW NOR OUR NATURE, AVAILS ONLY TO REMIT PAST SINS, NOT TO AVOID FUTURE ONES.

They also maintain that God's grace, which is given through the faith of Jesus Christ, and which is neither the law nor nature, avails only for the remission of sins that have been committed, and not for the shunning of future sins, or the subjugation of those which are now assailing us. Now if all this were true, surely after offering the petition of the Lord's Prayer, "Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors," we could hardly go on and say, "And lead us not into temptation."Mat 6.12-13 We present the former petition so that our sins may be forgiven; we present the latter so that they may be avoided or subdued—this is a favour which we would by no means beg of our Father who is in heaven, if we were able to accomplish it by the virtue of our human will. Now I strongly advise and earnestly require your Love to attentively read the book which the blessed Cyprian wrote, *On the Lord's Prayer*. As far as the Lord shall assist you, understand it and commit it to memory. In this work you will see how he so appeals to the free will of those whom he edifies in his treatise, as to show them that whatever they need to fulfil in the law, they must ask for in the prayer. But this of course would be utterly empty if the *human will* were sufficient to perform it without the help of God.

CHAPTER 27.
GRACE EFFECTS THE FULFILMENT OF THE LAW, THE DELIVERANCE OF NATURE, AND THE SUPPRESSION OF SIN'S DOMINION

It has, however, been demonstrated that instead of really maintaining free will, they have only inflated a theory of it which, having no stability, has fallen to the ground. Neither the knowledge of God's law, nor nature, nor the mere remission of sins, is that grace which is given to us through our Lord Jesus Christ; but it is this very grace which accomplishes the fulfilment of the law, and the liberation of nature, and the removal of the dominion of sin. Being therefore convicted on these points, they resort to another expedient, and endeavour to show in some way or other that the grace of God is given to us according to our merits. For they say: "Granted that it is not given to us according to the merits of good works, inasmuch as it is through [grace] that we do any good thing; still, it is given to us according to the merits of a good will; for," they say, "the good will of him who prays precedes his prayer, even as the will of the believer preceded his faith; so that according to these merits, the grace of God who hears, follows."

CHAPTER 28.
FAITH IS THE GIFT OF GOD

I have already discussed the point concerning faith, that is, concerning the will of him who believes, even so far as to show that it pertains to grace—so that the apostle did not tell us, "I have obtained mercy because I was faithful;" but he said, "I have obtained mercy in order to be faithful."[1Cor 7.25] And there are many other passages of similar import—among them, that in which he bids us to "think soberly, according as God has dealt out to every man the proportion of faith;"[Rom 12.3] and that which I have already quoted: "By grace are you saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God;"[Eph 2.8] and again another in the same Epistle to the Ephesians: "Peace be to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ;"[Eph 6.23] and to the same effect, that passage in which he says, "For to you it is given on behalf of Christ not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake."[Phil 1.29] Both alike are therefore due to the grace of God—the faith of those who believe, and the patience of those who suffer—because the apostle spoke of both as given. Then again there is the passage, especially noticeable, in which he says, "We having the same spirit of faith,"[2Cor 4.13] for his phrase is not "the *knowledge* of faith," but "the *spirit* of faith;" and he expressed himself this way in order that we might understand how that faith is given to us, even when it is not sought, so that other blessings may be granted to it at its request. For "how," he says, "shall they call upon Him in whom they have not believed?"[Rom 10.14] The spirit of grace, therefore, causes us to *have* faith, in order that *through* faith we may, upon praying for it, obtain the ability to do what we are commanded. On this account, the apostle himself constantly puts faith before the law, since we are not able to do what the law commands unless we obtain the strength to do it by the prayer of faith.

CHAPTER 29.
GOD IS ABLE TO CONVERT OPPOSING WILLS, AND TO TAKE AWAY FROM THE HEART ITS HARDNESS

Now if faith is simply of free will, and it is not given by God, then why do we pray for those who will not believe, that they may believe? It would be absolutely useless to do this unless we believe, with perfect propriety, that Almighty God is able to turn to belief, those wills that are perverse and opposed to faith. Man's free will is addressed when it is said, "Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts."Heb 3.15 But if God were not able to remove from the human heart even its obstinacy and hardness, then He would not say through the prophet, "I will take from them their heart of stone, and will give them a heart of flesh."Eze 11.19 That all this was foretold in reference to the New Testament is shown clearly enough by the apostle when he says, "You are our epistle ...written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tablets of stone, but in fleshly tablets of the heart."2Cor 3.2-3 We must not, of course, suppose that such a phrase as this is used as if those who ought to live spiritually might live in a fleshly way. But inasmuch as a stone has no feeling—to which man's hard heart is compared—what was there left Him to compare man's intelligent heart to, but the flesh, which possesses feeling? For this is what is said by the prophet Ezekiel: "I will give them another heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and I will give them a heart of flesh; that they may walk in my statutes, and keep my ordinances, and do them: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God, says the Lord."Eze 11.19-20 Now can we possibly (without extreme absurdity) maintain that there previously existed in any man the good merit of a good will, to entitle him to the removal of his stony heart, when all the while this very heart of stone signifies nothing else than a will of the hardest kind, and such that it is absolutely inflexible against God? For where a good will precedes, there is of course, no longer a heart of stone.

CHAPTER 30.
THE GRACE BY WHICH THE STONY HEART IS REMOVED IS NOT PRECEDED BY GOOD DESERTS, BUT BY EVIL ONES

In another passage also, by the same prophet [Ezekiel], God, in the clearest language, shows us that it is not owing to any good merits on the part of men, but for His own name's sake, that He does these things. This is His language: "This I do, O house of Israel, but for my holy name's sake, which you have profaned among the heathen, where you went. And I will sanctify my great name, which was profaned among the heathen, which you have profaned in the midst of them; and the heathen shall know that I am the Lord, says the Lord God, when I shall be sanctified in you before their eyes. For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land. Then will I sprinkle you with clean water, and you shall be clean: from all your own filthiness, and I will cleanse you from all your idols. A new heart also I will give you, and a new spirit I will put within you; and the stony heart shall be taken away out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and will cause you to walk in my statutes, and you shall keep my judgments, and do them."Eze 36.22-27 Now who is so blind as not to see, and who is so stone-like as not to feel, that this grace is not given according to the merits of a good will, when the Lord declares and testifies "It is I, O house of Israel, who do this, but for my holy name's sake"? Now why did He say "It is I that do it, but for my holy name's sake," if it were not that they should not think that it was owing to their own good merits that these things were happening, as the Pelagians do not hesitate to say unblushingly? But there were not only no good merits of theirs, but the Lord shows that evil ones actually preceded; for He says, "But for my holy name's sake, which you have profaned among the heathen." Who can fail to observe how dreadful is the evil of profaning the Lord's own holy name? And yet, for the sake of this very name of mine, He says, which you have profaned, I, even I, will make you good, but not for your own sakes; and as He adds "I will sanctify my great name, which was profaned among the heathen, which you have profaned in the midst of them." He says that He *sanctifies* His name, which He had already declared to be holy. Therefore, this is just what we pray for in the Lord's Prayer—"*Hollowed* be Your name." We ask for the hallowing among men of that which, in itself, is undoubtedly

always holy. Then it follows, “And the heathen shall know that I am the Lord, says the Lord God, when I shall be sanctified in you.” Although He Himself is always holy, He is nevertheless sanctified in those on whom He bestows His grace: by taking from them that stony heart by which they profaned the name of the Lord.

CHAPTER 31.
FREE WILL HAS ITS FUNCTION IN THE HEART'S CONVERSION; BUT GRACE TOO HAS ITS FUNCTION

Lest, however, it should be thought that men themselves in this matter do nothing by free will, it is said in the Psalm, "Do not harden not your hearts;"Psa 95.8 and in Ezekiel himself, "Cast away from you all your transgressions which you have impiously committed against me; and make you a new heart and a new spirit; and keep all my commandments. For why will you die, O house of Israel, says the Lord? For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dies, says the Lord God: and turn and live."Eze 18.31-32 We should remember that it is He who says, "Turn and live," to whom it is said in prayer, "Turn us again, O God." We should remember that He says, "Cast away from you all your transgressions," when it is even He who justifies the ungodly. We should remember that He says, "Make you a new heart and a new spirit," who also promises, "I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you."Eze 36.26 How is it then, that He who says, "Make you," also says, "I will give you"? Why does He command, if He is to give? Why does He give if man is to make, unless it is that He gives what He commands when He helps the one whom He commands, to obey? There is, however, always within us a free will—but it is not always good; for it is either free from righteousness when it serves sin—and then it is evil—or else it is free from sin when it serves righteousness—and then it is good. But the grace of God is always good; and by it, it comes to pass that a man is of a good will, though he was before of an evil one. By it also, it comes to pass that the very good will which has now begun to be, is enlarged, and made so great that it is able to fulfil the divine commandments which it wishes, once it firmly and perfectly wishes it. This is the purport of what the Scripture says: "If you will, you shall keep the commandments;"Sir 15.15 so that the man who wills but is not able, knows that he does not yet fully will; and he prays that he may have so great a will that it may suffice to keep the commandments. And thus indeed he receives assistance to perform what he is commanded. Then the will is of use when we have ability; just as ability is also of use when we have the will. For what does it profit us if we *will* what we are *unable* to do, or else do *not* will what we are *able* to do?

CHAPTER 32.
IN WHAT SENSE IT IS RIGHTLY SAID THAT, IF WE LIKE, WE MAY KEEP GOD'S COMMANDMENTS

The Pelagians think that they know something great when they assert that "God would not command what He knew could not be done by man." Who can be ignorant of this? But God commands some things which we cannot do, in order that we may know what we ought to ask of Him. For this is faith itself, which obtains by prayer what the law commands. Indeed, the one who said, "If you will, you shall keep the commandments," in the same book of Ecclesiasticus afterwards said, "Who shall give a watch before my mouth, and a seal of wisdom upon my lips, so that I do not suddenly fall thereby, and that my tongue does not destroy me."Sir 22.27 Now he had certainly heard and received these commandments: "Keep your tongue from evil, and your lips from speaking guile."Psa 34.13 Forasmuch, then, as what he said is true: "If you will, you shall keep the commandments," why does he want a watch to be given before his mouth, like the one who says in the Psalm, "Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth"?Psa 141.3 Why is he not satisfied with God's commandment and his own will, since if he has the will, he shall keep the commandments? How many of God's commandments are directed against pride! He is quite aware of them: *if he will, he may keep them*. Why, therefore, does he shortly afterwards say, "O God, Father and God of my life, do not give me a proud look"?Sir 23.4 The law had long ago said to him, "You shall not covet;" let him then only *will* and do what he is bid, because *if he has the will, he shall keep the commandments*. Why, therefore, does he afterwards say, "Turn away from me concupiscence"? Sir 23.5

Against luxury too, how many commandments God has enjoined! Let a man observe them; because, *if he will, he may keep the commandments*. But then what does that cry to God mean, "Let not the greediness of the belly nor the lust of the flesh take hold on me!"?Sir 23.6 Now, if we were to put this question to him personally, he would very rightly answer us and say, From that prayer of mine, in which I offer this particular petition to God, you may understand in what sense I said, "If you will, you may keep the commandments."

For it is certain that we keep the commandments *if we will*; but because

the will is prepared by the Lord, we must ask Him for such a force of will as suffices to make us *act* by the willing. It is certain that it is we that will, *when* we will; but it is He who *makes* us will what is good. It is said of Him (as he just now expressed it), "The will is prepared by the Lord."Prov 8.35 It is said about the same Lord, "The steps of a man are ordered by the Lord, and his way He wills."Psa 37.23 Of the same Lord again, it is said, "It is God who works in you, even to will!"Phil 2.13

It is certain that it is we that act, *when* we act; but it is He who *makes* us act, by applying efficacious powers to our will. He has said, "I will make you walk in my statutes, and observe my judgments, and do them."Eze 36.27 When he says, "I will make you ...to do them," what else does He in fact say than, "I will take away from you your heart of stone," from which used to arise your inability to act, "and I will give you a heart of flesh,"Eze 36.26 in order that you may act? And what does this promise amount to but this: I will remove your hard heart, out of which you did *not* act, and I will give you an obedient heart, out of which you *shall* act? It is He who causes us to act, to whom the human suppliant says, "Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth." That is to say: Make or enable me, O Lord, to set a watch before my mouth—a benefit which he had already obtained from God, who described its influence this way: "I set a watch upon my mouth."Psa 39.1

CHAPTER 33.
A GOOD WILL MAY BE SMALL AND WEAK; AN AMPLE WILL HAS GREAT LOVE—OPERATING AND COOPERATING GRACE

He, therefore, who wishes to do God's commandment, but is unable, already possesses a good will, but as yet it is a small and weak one; he will, however, become able when he has acquired a great and robust will. When the martyrs did the great commandments which they obeyed, they acted by a great will—that is, with great love. The Lord Himself thus speaks of this love: "Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."Joh 15.13 In accordance with this, the apostle also says, "He that loves his neighbour has fulfilled the law. For each of these, You shall not commit adultery, You shall not kill, You shall not steal, You shall not covet, and if there is any other commandment, is briefly comprehended in this saying: 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself.'Lev 19.18 Love works no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law."Rom 13.8-10 The Apostle Peter did not yet possess this love when out of fear he three times denied the Lord.Mat 26.69ff "There is no fear in love," says the Evangelist John in his first Epistle, "but perfect love casts out fear."1Joh 4.18 Yet however small and imperfect Peter's love was, it was not wholly lacking when he said to the Lord, "I will lay down my life for Your sake;"Joh 13.37 for he supposed himself able to effect what he felt himself was willing to do. And who was it that had begun to give him his love, however small, but He who prepares the will, and perfects by His *co-operation* what He initiates by His *operation*? Forasmuch as in beginning, He works *in* us so that we *may* have the will, and in perfecting, He works *with* us when we *have* the will. On this account the apostle says, "I am confident of this very thing, that He which has begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ."Phil 1.6 Therefore He operates without us, in order that we may will; but when we will, and so will that we may act, He co-operates with us. However, we can do nothing ourselves to effect good works of piety without Him, either working so that we *may* will, or co-working *when* we will. Now, concerning His working that we may will, it is said: "It is God who works in you, even to will."Phil 2.13 While the apostle says of His co-working with us, when we will and *act* by willing, "We know that in all things there is

co-working for good to those who love God."[10] What does this phrase "all things" mean, but the terrible and cruel sufferings which affect our condition? Indeed, that burden of Christ which is heavy for our infirmity, becomes light to love. For the Lord said that His burden was light[Mat 11.30] to those such as Peter when he suffered for Christ, not as he was when he denied Him.

CHAPTER 34.
THE APOSTLE'S EULOGY OF LOVE.
CORRECTION IS TO BE ADMINISTERED WITH LOVE

The apostle eulogizes this charity, that is, this *will* glowing with the most intense love, using these words: "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or the sword? (As it is written, For Your sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.) No, in all these things we are more than conquerors, through Him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."Rom 8.35-39 And in another passage he says, "And yet I show you a more excellent way. Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not love, I have become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not love, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not love, it profits me nothing. Love suffers long, and is kind; love envies not; love does not vaunt itself, is not puffed up, does not behave itself unseemly, seeks not her own, is not easily provoked, thinks no evil; rejoices not in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believeth all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails."1Cor 12.31-13.8 And a little afterwards he says, "And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love. Follow after love."1Cor 13.13-14.1 He also says to the Galatians, "For, brethren, you have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an occasion for the flesh, but by love serve one another. For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this, You shall love your neighbour as yourself."Gal 5.13 This is the same in effect as what he writes to the Romans: "He that loves another has fulfilled the law."Rom 13.8 In like manner he says to the Colossians, "And above all these things, put on love, which is the bond of perfectness."Col 3.14 And to Timothy he writes, "Now the end of the commandment is love;" and he goes on to describe the quality of this grace, saying, "Out of a pure heart, and of a good

conscience, and of faith unfeigned."[1Tim 1.5] Moreover, when he says to the Corinthians, "Let all your things be done with love,"[1Cor 16.14] he shows plainly enough that even those chastisements which are deemed sharp and bitter by those who are corrected by them, are to be administered with love. Accordingly, in another passage, after saying, "Warn those who are unruly, comfort the feeble-minded, support the weak, be patient toward all men," he immediately added, "See that none render evil for evil unto any man."[1Thes 5.14-15] Therefore, even when the unruly are corrected, it is not rendering evil for evil, but contrariwise, good for evil. However, what but love works all these things?

CHAPTER 35.
COMMENDATIONS OF LOVE

The Apostle Peter likewise says, “And, above all things, have fervent love among yourselves: for love shall cover the multitude of sins.”1Pet 4.8 The Apostle James also says, “If you fulfil the royal law, according to the Scripture, You shall love your neighbour as yourself, you do well.”Jas 2.8 So also the Apostle John says, “He that loves his brother abides in the right;”1Joh 2.10 again, in another passage, “Whoever does not [practice] righteousness is not of God, nor he that does not love his brother; for this is the message which we have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another.”1Joh 3.10-11 Then he says again, “This is His commandment, that we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another.”1Joh 3.23 Once more: “And this commandment we have from Him, that he who loves God should love his brother also.”1Joh 4.21 Then shortly afterwards he adds, “By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep His commandments; for this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments: and His commandments are not grievous.”1Joh 5.2-3 While, in his second Epistle, it is written, “It is not as though I wrote a new commandment to you, but that which we had from the beginning, that we love one another.”2Joh 1.5

CHAPTER 36.
LOVE COMMENDED BY OUR LORD HIMSELF

Moreover, the Lord Jesus Himself teaches us that the whole law and the prophets hang upon the two precepts of love to God, and love to our neighbour. Concerning these two commandments the following is written in the Gospel according to St. Mark: “And one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, and perceiving that He had answered them well, asked [Jesus]: Which is the first commandment of all? And Jesus answered him: The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel! The Lord our God is one Lord; and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.[Deu 6.4-5] This is the first commandment. And the second is like it: You shall love your neighbour as yourself.[Lev 19.18] There is no other commandment greater than these.”[Mar 12.28-31] Also, in the Gospel according to St. John, He says, “A new commandment I give you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, so you also love one another. By this all men shall know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”[Joh 13.34-35]

CHAPTER 37.
THE LOVE WHICH FULFILS THE COMMANDMENTS IS NOT OF OURSELVES, BUT OF GOD

All these commandments, however, respecting love or charity (which are so great, and such that whatever action a man may think he does well, is by no means done well if it is done without love) would be given to men in vain, if they did not have free choice of will. But inasmuch as these precepts are given in the law, both old and new,[11] from what source is there in men, the love of God and of one's neighbour, if not from God Himself? For indeed, if it is not from God but from men, then the Pelagians have gained the victory. But if it comes from God, then we have vanquished the Pelagians. Let then the Apostle John sit in judgment between us; and let him say to us, "Beloved, let us love one another."1Joh 4.7 Now, when they begin to extol themselves on these words of John, and ask why this precept is addressed to us at all, if we do not have it in ourselves to love one another, the same apostle proceeds at once (to their confusion) to add this, "For love is of God!" It is not of ourselves, therefore, but it is of God. Why then is it said, "Let us love one another, for love is of God,"1Joh 4.7 unless it is said as a precept to our free will, admonishing it to seek the gift of God? Now, this would be a thoroughly fruitless admonition indeed if the *will* did not previously receive some donation of love, which might seek to be enlarged so as to fulfil whatever command was laid upon it. When it is said, "Let us love one another," it is *law*; when it is said, "For love is of God," it is *grace*. For God's "wisdom carries law and mercy upon her tongue."Prov 3.16 Accordingly, it is written in the Psalm, "For He who gave the law will give blessings."[12]

CHAPTER 38.
WE WOULD NOT LOVE GOD UNLESS HE FIRST LOVED US. THE APOSTLES CHOSE CHRIST BECAUSE THEY WERE CHOSEN; THEY WERE NOT CHOSEN BECAUSE THEY CHOSE CHRIST

Let no one, then, deceive you, my brethren, for we should not love God unless He first loved us. John again gives us the plainest proof of this when he says, "We love Him because He first loved us."[1Joh 4.19] Grace makes us lovers of the law; but the law itself, without grace, makes us nothing but breakers of the law. And nothing else than this is shown us by the words of our Lord when He says to His disciples, "You have not chosen me, but I have chosen you."[Joh 15.16] For if we first loved Him, in order that by this merit He might love us, then we first chose Him that we might *deserve* to be chosen by Him. He, however, who is the Truth says otherwise, and flatly contradicts this vain conceit of men. "You have not chosen me," He says. If therefore you have not chosen me, undoubtedly you have not loved me (for how could they choose one whom they did not love?). "But I," He says, "have chosen you." And then could they possibly help choosing Him afterwards, and preferring Him to all the blessings of this world? But it was because they had been chosen, that they chose Him; not because they chose Him, that they were chosen. There could be no merit in men's choice of Christ, if it were not that God's grace was prevenient[13] in His choosing them. This is why the Apostle Paul pronounces this benediction in the Thessalonians: "The Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men."[1Thes 3.12] He gave us this benediction to love one another, who had also given us a law that we should love each other. Then in another passage addressed to the same church, seeing that there now existed in some of its members the disposition which he wished them to cultivate, he says, "We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is fitting, because your faith grows exceedingly, and the charity of every one of you all abounds toward each other."[2Thes 1.3] This he said lest they should boast of the great good which they were enjoying from God, as if they had it of their own mere selves.

This is the purport of his words: 'Because your faith has so great a growth, and the love of every one of you all toward each other so greatly

abounds, we ought to thank God concerning you, but not to praise you, as if you possessed these gifts of yourselves.'

CHAPTER 39.
THE SPIRIT OF FEAR IS A GREAT GIFT OF GOD

The apostle also says to Timothy, "For God has not given to us the spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind."2Tim 1.7 Now in respect to this passage of the apostle, we must be on our guard against supposing that we have not received the spirit of the fear of God, which undoubtedly is a great gift of God, and concerning which the prophet Isaiah says, "The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon you, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and piety, *the spirit of the fear of the Lord*."Isa 11.2 We have not received the spirit of fear with which Peter denied Christ, but that fear concerning which Christ Himself says, "Fear Him who has power to destroy both soul and body in hell; indeed, I say to you, Fear Him."Luk 12.5 This indeed He said, lest we should deny Him from the same fear which shook Peter; for he plainly wished such cowardice to be removed from us when, in the preceding passage, He said, "Do not be afraid of those who kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do."Luk 12.4 It is not of this fear that we have received the spirit; but the spirit "of power, and of love, and of a sound mind."2Tim 1.7 And of this spirit the same Apostle Paul discourses to the Romans: "We glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation works patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope; and hope does not make ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, who is given to us."Rom 5.4-5 Therefore, it is not by ourselves, but by the Holy Ghost who is given to us, that it comes to pass that through the very love which he shows us to be the gift of God, tribulation does not do away with patience, but rather it produces it. Again, he says to the Ephesians, "Peace be to the brethren, and love with faith."Eph 6.23 These are great blessings! Let him tell us, however, where they come from: "From God the Father," he says immediately afterwards, "and the Lord Jesus Christ."Joh 1.5 These great blessings are therefore nothing else than *God's gifts to us*.

CHAPTER 40.
PELAGIANS ARE IGNORANT IN MAINTAINING THAT THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE LAW COMES FROM GOD, BUT THAT LOVE COMES FROM OURSELVES

It is no wonder that "light shines in darkness, and the darkness does not comprehend it."Joh 1.5 In John's Epistle, the Light declares, "Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God."1Joh 3.1 And in the Pelagian writings, the darkness says, "Love comes to us of ourselves." Now, if they only possessed the true love, that is, Christian love, they would also know where they obtained possession of it; even as the apostle knew when he said, "But we have not received the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God, that we might know the things that are freely given to us by God."1Cor 2.12 John says, "God is love."1Joh 4.16 And thus the Pelagians affirm that they actually have God Himself, not from God, but from their own selves! And although they allow that we have the knowledge of the law from God, they would yet have it that love is from our very selves. Nor do they listen to the apostle when he says, "Knowledge puffs up, but love edifies."1Cor 8.1 Now what can be more absurd—no—what can be more insane and more alien to the very sacredness of love itself, than to maintain that from God proceeds the knowledge which, apart from love, puffs us up; while the love which prevents the possibility of this inflation of knowledge, springs from ourselves? And again, when the apostle speaks of "the love of Christ as surpassing knowledge,"Eph 3.19 what can be more insane than to suppose that the knowledge which must be subordinated to love comes from God, while the love which surpasses knowledge comes from man? The true faith however, and sound doctrine, declare that both graces *are from God*. The Scripture says, "From His face comes knowledge and understanding;"Prov 2.6 and another Scripture says, "Love is of God."1Joh 4.7 We read of "the Spirit of wisdom and understanding."Isa 11.2 Also of "the Spirit of power, and of love, and of a sound mind."2Tim 1.7 But love is a greater gift than knowledge; for whenever a man has the gift of knowledge, love is necessary by the side of it, so that he is not puffed up. For "love does not envy, does not vaunt itself, is not puffed up."1Cor 13.4

CHAPTER 41.
THE WILLS OF MEN ARE SO MUCH IN THE POWER OF GOD, THAT HE CAN TURN THEM HOWEVER IT PLEASES HIM

I think I have now discussed the point fully enough in opposition to those who vehemently oppose the grace of God, by which the human will is not taken away, but changed from bad to good, and assisted when it is good. I think, too, that I have so discussed the subject that it is not so much myself that has spoken to you, as the inspired Scripture, in the clearest testimonies of truth. And if this divine record is looked into carefully, it shows us that not only men's good wills—which God Himself converts from bad ones, and when converted by Him, He directs them to good actions and to eternal life—but also those which follow the world, are so entirely at the disposal of God, that He turns them *however* He wills, and *whenever* He wills—to bestow kindness on some, and to heap punishment on others, as He Himself judges right by a counsel that is most secret to Himself indeed, but beyond all doubt most righteous. For we find that some sins are even the punishment of other sins, as are those "vessels of wrath" which the apostle describes as "fitted for destruction;"Rom 9.22 as is also that hardening of Pharaoh, the purpose of which is to set forth in him the power of God;Exo 7.5; 10.1 as is again, the flight of the Israelites from the face of the enemy before the city of Ai, for fear arose in their heart so that they fled;Jos 7.4 and this was done so that their sin might be punished in the right way, as it should be. For this reason the Lord said to Joshua the son of Nun, "The children of Israel shall not be able to stand before the face of their enemies."Jos 7.12 What is the meaning of, "They shall not be able to stand"? Now, why did they not stand by free will, but instead, with a will perplexed by fear, they took to flight? Was it not that God has lordship even over men's wills? And when He is angry, He turns to fear whomever He pleases? Was it not of their own will that the enemies of the children of Israel fought against the people of God, led by Joshua the son of Nun? And yet the Scripture says, "It was of the Lord to harden their hearts, so that they would come against Israel in battle, that they might be exterminated."Jos 11.20

And was it not likewise of his own will that the wicked son of Gera cursed King David? And yet what does David say, full of true, and deep, and pious wisdom? What did he say to the one who wanted to kill the reviler?

"What," he said, "do I have to do with you, you sons of Zeruiah? Let him alone and let him curse, because *the Lord has said to him*, Curse David. Who then shall say, Why have you done so?"2Sam 16.9-10 And then the inspired Scripture, as if it would confirm the king's profound utterance by repeating it once more, tells us: "And David said to Abishai, and to all his servants, Behold my son, who came forth from my bowels, seeks my life: how much more may this Benjamite do it! Let him alone, and let him curse; for the Lord has bid him. It may be that the Lord will look on my humiliation, and will requite me good for his cursing this day."2Sam 16.11-12 Now what prudent reader will fail to understand in what way the Lord bid this profane man to curse David? It was not by a *command* that He bid him, in which case his obedience would be praiseworthy; but He *inclined the man's will*, which had become debased by his own perverseness, to commit this sin by His own just and secret judgment. Therefore it is said, "The Lord said to him." Now if this person had obeyed a command of God, he would have deserved to be praised rather than punished, as we know he was afterwards punished for this sin.1Kng 2.8-9 Nor is the reason an obscure one why the Lord told him to curse David in this way. "It may be," said the humbled king, "that the Lord will look on my humiliation, and will requite me good for his cursing this day." See then what proof we have here that God uses the hearts even of wicked men for the praise and assistance of the good.

Thus He made use of Judas when betraying Christ; thus He made use of the Jews when they crucified Christ. And how vast the blessings which, from these instances, He has bestowed upon the nations that would believe in Him! He also uses our worst enemy, the devil himself, but in the best way, to exercise and test the faith and piety of good men—not for Himself indeed, who knows all things before they come to pass—but for our sakes, for whom it was necessary to go through such a discipline. Did not Absalom choose by his own will the counsel which was detrimental to him? And yet the reason for his doing so was that the Lord had heard his father's prayer that it might be so. Therefore the Scripture says that "the Lord appointed to defeat the good counsel of Ahithophel, to the intent that the Lord might bring all evils upon Absalom."2Sam 17.14 It called Ahithophel's counsel "good," because it was for the moment, of advantage to his purpose. It was in favour of the son against his father, against whom the son had rebelled; and it might have crushed David, if the Lord had not defeated the counsel which Ahithophel had given, by acting on

the heart of Absalom so that he rejected this counsel, and chose another which was not expedient for him.

CHAPTER 42.
GOD DOES WHATEVER HE WILLS IN THE HEARTS EVEN OF WICKED MEN

Who can help trembling at those judgments of God by which He does whatever He wills in the hearts of even wicked men, at the same time rendering to them according to their deeds? Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, rejected the salutary counsel of the old men, not to deal harshly with the people, and preferred listening to the words of the young men of his own age, by returning a rough answer to those to whom he should have spoken gently. Now where did such conduct arise, except from his own will? Upon this, however, the ten tribes of Israel revolted from him, and chose for themselves another king, even Jeroboam, so that the will of God in His anger might be accomplished, which He had predicted would come to pass.[1Kng 12.8-14] For what does the Scripture say? "The king did not listen to the people; for the turning was from the Lord, so that He might perform His saying which the Lord spoke to Ahijah the Shilonite concerning Jeroboam the son of Nebat."[1Kng 12.15] All this indeed was done by the will of man, although the turning was from the Lord.

Read the books of the Chronicles, and you will find the following passage in the second book: "Moreover, the Lord stirred up against Jehoram the spirit of the Philistines, and of the Arabians, that were neighbours to the Ethiopians; and they came up to the land of Judah and ravaged it, and carried away all the substance which was found in the king's house."[2Chr 21.16-17] Here it is shown that God stirs up enemies to devastate the countries which He adjudges deserving of such chastisement. Still, did these Philistines and Arabians invade the land of Judah to waste it with no will of their own? Or were their movements so directed by their own will that the Scripture lies which tells us that "the Lord stirred up their spirit" to do all this? Both statements to be sure are true, because they both came by their own will, and yet the Lord stirred up their spirit; and this may also be stated with equal truth the other way: The Lord both stirred up their spirit, and yet they came of their own will. For the Almighty sets in motion, even in the innermost hearts of men, the movement of their will, so that He does through their agency whatever He wishes to perform through them—even He who does not know how to will anything in unrighteousness.

What, again, is the purport of that which the man of God said to King Amaziah: “Do not let the army of Israel go with you; for the Lord is not with Israel, not even with all the children of Ephraim: for if you think to obtain with these, the Lord shall put you to flight before your enemies: for God has power either to strengthen or to put to flight”?2Chr 25.7-8 Now, how does the power of God help some in war by giving them confidence, and put others to flight by injecting fear into them, unless He who made all things in heaven and on earth, according to His own will, also works in the hearts of men?

We read also what Joash, king of Israel, said when he sent a message to Amaziah, king of Judah, who wanted to fight with him. After certain other words, he added, “Now wait at home; why do you challenge me to your hurt, so that you should fall, even you, and Judah with you?”2Kng 14.10 Then the Scripture has this sequel added: “But Amaziah would not hear; for it came from God, so that he might be delivered into their hands, because they sought after the gods of Edom.”2Chr 25.20 Behold, now, how God, wishing to punish the sin of idolatry, worked this in this man’s heart, with whom He was indeed justly angry, not to listen to sound advice but to despise it, and go to the battle in which he with his army was routed. God says by the prophet Ezekiel, “If the prophet is deceived when he has spoken a thing, I the Lord have deceived that prophet: I will stretch out my hand upon him, and will destroy him from the midst of my people Israel.”Eze 14.9

Then there is the book of Esther, who was a woman of the people of Israel, and in the land of their captivity she became the wife of the foreign King Ahasuerus. In this book it is written, that being driven by necessity to interpose in behalf of her people, whom the king had ordered to be slain in every part of his dominions, she prayed to the Lord.Est 4.17 So strongly was she urged by the necessity of the case, that she even ventured into the royal presence without the king’s command, and contrary to her own custom. Now observe what the Scripture says:[14] “He looked at her like a bull in the vehemence of his indignation; and the queen was afraid, and her colour changed as she fainted; and she bowed herself upon the head of her delicate maiden who went before her. But God turned the king, and transformed his indignation into gentleness.”Est 15.10-11 DRM The Scripture says in the Proverbs of Solomon, “Even as the rush of water, so is the heart of a king in God’s hand; He will turn it in

whatever way He shall choose."Prov 21.1 Again, in the 105th Psalm, in reference to the Egyptians, one reads what God did to them: "And He turned their heart to hate His people, to deal subtly with His servants."Psa 105.25 Observe, likewise, what is written in the letters of the Apostles. In the Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Romans, these words occur: "Therefore God gave them up to uncleanness, through the lusts of their own hearts;"Rom 1.24 and a little afterwards: "For this cause God gave them up to vile affections;"Rom 1.26 again, in the next passage: "And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient."Rom 1.28 So also in his second Epistle to the Thessalonians, the apostle says of various persons, "because they did not receive the love of the truth so that they might be saved; for this reason also, God shall send them a strong delusion, that they should believe a lie; that they all might be judged who did not believe the truth, but took pleasure in unrighteousness."2Thes 2.10-12

CHAPTER 43.
GOD OPERATES ON MEN'S HEARTS: TO INCLINE THEIR WILLS HOWEVER HE PLEASES

From these statements of the inspired word, and from similar passages which it would take too long to quote in full, I think it is sufficiently clear that God works in the hearts of men to incline their wills however He wills, whether to good deeds according to His mercy, or to evil deeds after their own deserts—His own judgment being sometimes manifest, sometimes secret, but always righteous. This ought to be the fixed and immoveable conviction of your heart, that there is no unrighteousness with God. Therefore, whenever you read in the Scriptures of Truth, that men are led aside, or that their hearts are blunted and hardened by God, never doubt that some ill deserts of their own have first occurred, so that they justly suffer these things. Thus you will not run counter to that proverb of Solomon: "The foolishness of a man perverts his ways, yet he blames God in his heart."Prov 19.3 Grace, however, is not bestowed according to men's deserts; "otherwise grace would no longer be grace."Rom 11.6 For grace is so designated because it is given gratuitously. Now if God is able, either through the agency of angels (whether good ones or evil), or in any other way whatsoever, to operate in the hearts even of the wicked, in return for their deserts—whose wickedness was not made by God, but was either derived originally from Adam, or increased by their own will—what is there to wonder at if, through the Holy Spirit, God works good in the hearts of the elect, having worked it that their hearts become good instead of evil?

CHAPTER 44.
GRATUITOUS GRACE EXEMPLIFIED IN INFANTS

Men, however, may suppose that there are certain good deserts which they think are precedent to justification through God's grace; all the while failing to see, when they express such an opinion, that they do nothing else than deny grace. But, as I have already remarked, let them suppose what they like respecting the case of adults. In the case of infants, at any rate, the Pelagians find no means of answering the difficulty. For these infants, in receiving grace, have no will from the influence of which they can pretend to have any precedent merit. Moreover, we see how they cry and struggle when they are baptized, and feel the divine sacraments. Such conduct would, of course, be charged against them as a great impiety, if they already had free will in use; and notwithstanding this, grace clings to them even in their resisting struggles. But most certainly there is no prevenient merit; otherwise the grace would no longer be grace. Sometimes too, this grace is bestowed on the children of unbelievers when they happen, by some means or other, to fall into the hands of pious persons by reason of God's secret providence. On the other hand, the children of believers may fail to obtain grace, because some hindrance occurs to prevent the approach of help to rescue them in their danger. These things no doubt happen through the secret providence of God, whose judgments are unsearchable, and His ways past finding out.[Rom 11.33] These are the words of the apostle; and you should observe what he had previously said to lead him to add such a remark. He was discoursing about the Jews and Gentiles when he wrote to the Romans—who were themselves Gentiles—to this effect: "For as in times past, you had not believed God, yet now you have obtained mercy through their unbelief; even so, these also have not now believed, so that through your mercy, they also may obtain mercy; for God has concluded them all in unbelief, that He might have mercy upon all."[Rom 11.30-32]

Now, after he had thought upon what he said, full of wonder at the certain truth of his own assertion indeed, but astonished at its great depth, how God concluded all in unbelief that He might have mercy upon all—as if doing evil that good might come—he at once exclaimed, and said, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding

out!”Rom 11.33 Perverse men, who do not reflect upon these unsearchable judgments and indeed untraceable ways, but who are ever prone to censure, being unable to understand, have supposed the apostle to say, and censoriously gloried over him for saying it, “Let us do evil, that good may come!”Rom 3.8 God forbid that the apostle should say so! But men without understanding have thought that this was in fact said when they heard these words of the apostle: “Moreover, the law entered, that the offence might abound; but where sin abounded, grace much more abounded.”Rom 5.20 But grace indeed effects this purpose: that good works should now be worked by those who previously did evil; not that they should persevere in evil courses and suppose that they will be recompensed with good. Their language, therefore, ought not to be: “Let us do evil, that good may come;” but: “We have done evil, and good has come; let us hereafter do good, that in the future world we may receive good for good, who in the present life are receiving good for evil.” This is why it is written in the Psalm, “I will sing of mercy and judgment to You, O Lord.”Psa 101.1 When the Son of man, therefore, first came into the world, it was “not to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him.”Joh 3.17 And this dispensation was for mercy. By and by, however, He will come for judgment—to judge the quick and the dead.[15] And yet even in this present time, salvation itself does not eventuate without judgment—although it is a hidden one. Therefore He says, “For judgment I have come into this world, that those who do not see may see, and that those who see may be made blind.”Joh 9.39

CHAPTER 45.
THE REASON WHY ONE PERSON IS ASSISTED BY GRACE, AND ANOTHER IS NOT, MUST BE REFERRED TO THE SECRET JUDGMENTS OF GOD

You must refer the matter then to the hidden determinations of God when you see all infants in one and the same condition, such as all unquestionably have who derive their hereditary evil from Adam. One is assisted so as to be baptized, and another is not assisted, so that he dies in his bondage. And again you see that one baptized person is left and forsaken in his present life, whom God foreknew would be ungodly, while another baptized person is taken away from this life, "lest that wickedness were to alter his understanding."Wis 4.11 Be sure in such cases that you do not ascribe unrighteousness or unwisdom to God, in whom is the very fountain of righteousness and wisdom; but as I have exhorted you from the commencement of this treatise, "to what you have already attained, walk in it,"Phil 3.16 and "even this God shall reveal to you,"Phil 3.15 —if not in this life, yet certainly in the next, "for there is nothing covered that shall not be revealed."Mat 10.26 When therefore you hear the Lord say, "I the Lord have deceived that prophet,"Eze 14.9 and likewise hear what the apostle says: "He has mercy on whom He will have mercy, and whom He will, He hardens,"Rom 9.18 believe that in the case of the one whom God permits to be deceived and hardened, his evil deeds have deserved the judgment; while in the case of the one to whom God shows mercy, you should loyally and unhesitatingly recognize the grace of the God who "does not render evil for evil; but contrariwise, blessing."1Pet 3.9 Nor should you take away from Pharaoh his free will; because in several passages God says, "I have hardened Pharaoh;" or, "I have hardened, or I *will* harden Pharaoh's heart;" but it does not by any means follow that Pharaoh did not on this account harden his own heart. For this too is said of him after the removal of the fly-plague from the Egyptians, in these words of the Scripture: "And *Pharaoh hardened his heart* at this time also; nor would he let the people go."Exo 8.32 Thus it was that both God hardened him by His just judgment, and Pharaoh [hardened himself] by his own free will. Be then well-assured that your labour will never be in vain if, setting before you a good purpose, you persevere in it to the last. For God—who fails to render according to their deeds, only to those

whom He liberates—will then "recompense every man according to his works."[Mat 16.27] God will therefore certainly recompense both evil for evil, because He is just; and good for evil, because He is good; and good for good, because He is good and just; but He will never recompense evil for good, because He is not unjust. He will therefore recompense evil for evil—punishment for unrighteousness; and He will recompense good for evil—grace for unrighteousness; and He will recompense good for good—grace for grace.

CHAPTER 46.
UNDERSTANDING AND WISDOM MUST BE SOUGHT FROM GOD

Peruse attentively this treatise, and if you understand it, give God the praise; but where you fail to understand it, pray for understanding, for God will give you understanding. Remember what the Scriptures say: "If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all men liberally, and does not upbraid; and it shall be given to him."Jas 1.5 Wisdom itself comes down from above,Jas 3.17 as the Apostle James himself tells us. There is, however, another wisdom, which you must repel from you, and pray against its remaining in you; this the same apostle expressed his detestation of when he said, "But if you have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, ...this is not the wisdom which descends from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. For wherever there is envying and strife, there is also confusion, and every evil work. But the wisdom which is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good works, without partiality, and without hypocrisy."Jas 3.14-17 What blessing then, will that man not have, who has prayed for this wisdom, and obtained it from the Lord? And from this you may understand what *grace* is; because if this wisdom were from ourselves, it would not be from above; nor would it be an object to be asked for from the God who created us. Brethren, pray for us also, that we may live "soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ,"Tit 2.12 to whom belong the honour, and the glory, and the kingdom, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, for ever and ever.

AMEN.

Notes

[←1]

Pelagius (c. 354-420) His supporters cited Deu 24:16 to deny original sin: "Fathers shall not be put to death for *their* children, nor shall the children be put to death for *their* fathers; a person shall be put to death for his own sin." He was declared a heretic by the Council of Carthage (419). Pelagius spent time as an ascetic and was widely admired; even Augustine described him as a "saintly man." Pelagius had been appalled by the wanton behavior of Christians at Rome. They so abused their liberty in Christ, and freedom from the Law, that they brought Christ's name into condemnation (*Rom 2.24; 6.1*). To correct this lack of self-control, Pelagius emphasized *Sanctification* by godliness under the Law, over *Justification* by grace under the Gospel. That led to a general misunderstanding of the roles of the Law and the Gospel in Salvation. Pelagianism adds works to grace as a *means* of Justification, rather than works being the indispensable *evidence* of God's justifying grace. **Augustine** proves that we are *justified* (saved) by God's grace alone, and that we are also *sanctified* (we live to God) by God's grace alone, even though we work out our salvation in fear and trembling (Phil 2.12) — it is God's grace at work in us by His Spirit (Col 1.29; Eph 3.7; 1Pet 1.2), through faith (Eph 2.8-9; Act 2.38). This is the great truth rediscovered at the time of the Reformation, but known since the beginning.

[←2]
That which is deserved or merited; a just punishment or reward.

[←3]

This is a quote from “The Book of the All-Virtuous Wisdom of Joshua ben Sira”, commonly called the *Wisdom of Sirach*, or simply *Sirach*. Beginning with Cyprian, it was known as *The Book of Ecclesiasticus*, not to be confused with *Ecclesiastes*. Citations for *Ecclesiasticus* are indicated by “Sir” for *Sirach*.

[←4]
His “delight.”

[←5]

Jas 2:1 My brethren, do not hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, *the Lord* of glory, [along] with partiality.

[←6]

Conversation here means the way we conduct ourselves in society.

[←7]

They are evil works because they are tainted by the remaining corruption of our flesh. **Rom 7:18** For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) **nothing good** dwells; for to will is present with me, but *how* to perform what is good I do not find.

[←8]
The intended meaning.

[←9]

In other words, if the law could aid them to obey the law, then it would be of grace, and not of the law.

[←10]

Rom 8.28. The Latin indefinite passive *co-operatur* invited this turn in the usage of the passage.

[← 11]

Although in the new came the grace which was promised in the old; but the law without grace, is the letter which kills; but in grace, it is the Spirit which gives life.

[←12]

This is an obscure reference. It may be **Psa 94:12** “Blessed *is* the man whom You instruct, O LORD, And teach out of Your law.” In Augustine’s *Exposition of Psalm 119*.11, he says “as it is read in another Psalm, ‘He shall give blessing, who gave the law;’” – but the Psalm number is not included – WHG.

[←13]

Prevenient simply means *anticipatory*; but in John Wesley's use of the word, it meant that God anticipated what men would do in the future, as far as merit or faith, and He then elected men accordingly. But Augustine means here that God anticipated what *He* would do, not what *men* would do. It is *precedent* grace (see chap. 44).

[←14]

This passage is not in the modern canon; but it is found in the Douay Rheims version, an English translation of the Latin Vulgate, Jerome's translation which was completed c. 405, and available to Augustine.

[←15]

Act 10.42; 2Tim 4.1; 1Pet 4.5.